



Loudoun County, Virginia
Department of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Management

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Cold Weather Safety Tips

As cold weather has moved into the area, Loudoun County's Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Management has experienced an increase in cold weather related emergencies. It is important to remember that in inclement weather you must take additional safety precautions for your home as well as your personal safety. The more prevalent types of winter weather emergencies we have responded to are vehicle accidents, broken water pipes, inside gas leaks related to carbon monoxide and falls. Some critical safety tips to remember during extreme winter weather include:

- Be aware of current road conditions and plan accordingly. If travel is absolutely necessary, slow down, travel in the day; don't travel alone; keep others informed of your schedule; stay on main roads and avoid back road shortcuts and keep a disaster supplies kit in your vehicle.
- During cold weather to prevent your pipes from freezing, allow a faucet to drip cold water slowly. The faucet you choose should be the one that is the greatest distance from your main water shut off valve.
- Open kitchen and cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. Always remove any toxic substances first if there are small children in the home.
- Install CO alarms and smoke alarms in a central location outside sleeping areas and on every level of the home.
- Have fireplaces and heating equipment serviced annually.
- Use caution when disposing of fireplace ashes or any flammable materials in or around your home. Fireplace ashes, cigarette butts, and grill or fire pit remnants should be placed outside in a closed metal container, a safe distance away from any structures.
- To avoid slips and falls in icy conditions, keep walkways clear and treated, wear proper foot gear with good traction and step slowly and carefully.
- Also remember to avoid overexertion when shoveling snow. Overexertion can bring on a heart attack or other medical emergency. If you must shovel snow, stretch before going outside, take frequent breaks and stay hydrated.